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4239 '99 MAY 19 P3:32
Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Docket #98N-1038

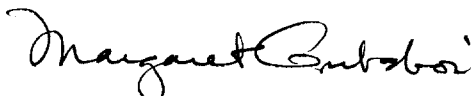
I am an investor who owns shares in five companies which produce, process, distribute and market organic foodstuffs. Such firms, catering as they do to a segment of the public willing and able to pay above-average prices for food because they want above-average taste, texture and nutrition for themselves and their families, would be hurt financially by labels which fail to clearly identify foods that have been irradiated. Fuzziness in labeling could easily produce situations in which stores inadvertently mislead customers about the nature of their foodstuffs. Customers, especially this group of customers, do not easily forgive such lapses, which would be costly to any firms making such mistakes.

The large and growing segment of the buying public that is demanding organic foodstuffs and patronizing stores like those in which I have invested appears to be almost universally opposed to irradiated foods. They, and the businesses which cater to them, know that irradiation reduces the vitamin content of foods, creates new chemical substances in foods (including some known to be carcinogenic) and changes the texture and taste of foods.

For all these reasons, irradiated foods should continue to be clearly labeled as such, with statements that are easily understood--the word "pasteurization" should *not* be used. The labels also should continue to display the readily-recognized radura symbol.

I believe the comment period on this issue should be extended past May 18 as there has been too little public discussion of this proposed change. It is being promoted by agribusiness with little regard for smaller, more specialized growers, processors and marketers who also are important in the food industry.

Sincerely,


Margaret Gribkov

cc/Members of the Oregon Congressional delegation

98N 1038

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